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development in Afghanistan as well as strengthened cooperation within Central Asia. *(Photo: Alijon Shoev, Representative of Tajik Chamber of Commerce in Afghanistan, speaks about trade with Afghanistan)*

Regional Trade Initiative Links Central Asia and Afghanistan. USAID brought together 13 companies from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at a May 16 launch event for the Export Partnership Initiative, an effort to improve exports and trade with Afghanistan. The initiative unites the efforts of producers, traders, service providers and international projects aimed at developing trade relations with Afghanistan to better identify shared interests and resources, and improving prospects for regional economic growth. Afghanistan shows high demand for Central Asian products, including clothing, wheat and industrial products, but the trade links to bring in those products are not yet in place. By developing these links in partnership with local firms, USAID/Central Asian Republics supports economic



Regional Effort to Improve Adherence to HIV and TB Treatment. The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project facilitated a meeting on multidisciplinary approaches for forming adherence to HIV and TB treatment among people living with HIV/AIDS in Almaty on June 27-28. It brought together 44 participants from four Central Asian countries working in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. International experience shows that the most effective way to improve adherence to treatment among people living with HIV/AIDS is to gain mutual cooperation between medical and social services. The Project's multidisciplinary team approach is patient oriented and carried out by a team of doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers and outreach workers in coordination with a range of medical institutions. *(Photo: Participants discuss methods of HIV and TB treatment adherence)*

Kazakhstan



experiences, discussing relevant issues and developing practical recommendations on further strengthening the regional partnership in all five Central Asian countries. The event was supported by USAID along with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S. State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. *(Photo: Observers at the event)*

Regional Trafficking in Persons Event in Astana. On May 27, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), together with the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, hosted a regional dialogue "Enhancing Partnership of Central Asian Countries in Combating Trafficking in Persons as a Consequence of Irregular Migration." The event aimed to strengthen regional cooperation among the Central Asian law enforcement bodies and NGOs engaged in combating human trafficking and protecting the victims of trafficking. It was unique as all five Central Asian republics sent high-level representatives from law enforcement agencies, migration services and non-governmental organizations to discuss the problem of trafficking in a regional context. The dialogue provided a platform for sharing



knowledge and understanding of MAT programs in Kazakhstan. *(Photo: International experts and Kazakhstani health practitioners discuss medication-assisted therapy for HIV prevention)*

USAID Strengthens Understanding and Implementation of Methadone Therapy. On May 31 in Astana, the USAID Quality Health Care Project held discussions between Central Asian health practitioners and international health experts on the use of medication-assisted therapy (MAT) to prevent the spread of HIV among injecting drug users. USAID brought together medical professionals who manage programs and treat and provide services to MAT patients and international MAT experts to exchange lessons learned, highlight challenges and solutions, and consult with international counterparts on operational issues related to MAT programs, which play a critical role in stopping HIV transmission by reducing the use of injected drugs. These discussions are part of USAID's strategy to increase



USAID Project Proposes Changes to Law. The USAID Legal Support for Civil Society Program promoted significant changes to the Law on State Social Contracting during a public hearing sponsored by the Ministry of Culture in May 2011. The revised draft law on social contracting is endorsed by numerous parliamentary deputies and includes key recommendations from leading NGOs developed and promoted with USAID assistance over several years. The law is designed to expand the term of financing for social contracts, to improve the selection criteria by which social contracts will be awarded, and to establish a new coordinating body that will have authority to gather data and propose uniform regulations to improve the process of awarding and evaluating contracts. Seventy-five government officials and NGO representatives attended this public hearing. The next step is for the Parliamentary working group to formally approve the amendments and submit them to Parliament to be voted on in summer 2011. *(Photo: Banu (left), a major government counterpart of the USAID Legal Support for Civil Society Program, thanked ICNL Regional Director Elizabeth Warner (center) and ICNL KZ lawyer Aigul Kaptayeva (right) for their work on the social contracting law)*

Tajikistan



U.S.–Russia Cooperation on Polio in Tajikistan. A team of U.S. and Russian polio immunization experts, including USAID Global Polio Eradication Coordinator Ellyn Ogden and representatives from Russia's Polio Institute, monitored Tajikistan's national polio immunization campaign May 23-27. The team visited sites near Dushanbe and across southern Tajikistan to the Afghan border before providing a report of their findings on the campaign's quality to the Ministry of Health. This was the first joint U.S.-Russian site monitoring effort on polio, which the team hopes to replicate in more countries. U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Necia Quast and Russian Deputy Chief of Mission Vladimir Vaniev congratulated participants on their efforts at an informal gathering at the week's end. *(Photo: Taken at the U.S.–Russia reception)*



USAID Delivers Food to Tuberculosis Hospital. On June 20 Ambassador Ken Gross, Deputy Minister of Health Sohibnazar Rahmonov and Firuza Abdullaeva of the Tajik charitable organization "Avesto" presented 2,800 kilograms of lentils and vegetable soup mix to patients at Tajikistan's National TB Hospital. USAID in cooperation with Tajik NGO Avesto and the American organization Resource and Policy Exchange, Inc. distributed over 37 metric tons of enriched food supplies to over 22,000 people across Tajikistan. The Food for Peace Project will work in Tajikistan through November 2011 to enhance food security among children with disabilities, tuberculosis patients and other patients in health care facilities in Tajikistan. The current humanitarian shipment, estimated at \$93,049, has been provided to residents of over 77 social institutions, including specialized treatment facilities in Tajikistan. The shipment includes dehydrated

vegetable blend enriched with vitamins and minerals and will be used to prepare soup for the residents of these institutions. The non-government organization "Avesto" delivered the food supplies to the recipient institutions and will monitor their distribution. The Harvest Lentil Pro soup mix is produced by the Breedlove Dehydrated Foods Company and consists of dried carrots, potatoes, soy, rice, lentils, and is enriched with vitamins, and minerals. *(Photo: Ambassador Gross hands over vegetable soup mix to the Deputy Minister of Health Sohibnazar Rahmonov)*



USAID Observes International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. On June 25 the USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project joined with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Youth Committee for Sports and Tourism under the President of Tajikistan, Global Fund and NGOs working in drug abuse prevention, to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Young people gathered at the People's Friendship Park in Dushanbe on June 25 to show their determination in the fight for a society free of drug abuse. The event highlighted the danger that illicit drugs pose to humanity and raised awareness of drug abuse prevention. There were competitions, quizzes and musical performances about efforts made to fight

drug abuse. Emphasis was placed on the necessity of HIV testing to start treatment on time if the virus is detected. Participants learned about drug addiction treatment in narcological dispensaries throughout the country. The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project conducted similar events in Khujand, Kulob and Qurghonteppa. *(Photo: The event was well received and attracted a large crowd)*



USAID to Combat School Dropout in Tajikistan. On May 10, Jeffrey Lehrer, Country Director, USAID/Tajikistan and Mr. Abdujabbor Rahmonov, Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan, signed a letter of cooperation to collaborate on a three-year School Dropout Prevention Pilot program. The program aims to prevent children from dropping out of school and will be implemented in Khatlon Oblast in regions identified as having some of the highest dropout rates. The School Dropout Prevention Pilot is a research-based program that will identify children at greatest risk for dropping out and work with school administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community at large, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, to identify, implement and evaluate measures to keep those children in school. Cambodia, India, and Timor Leste are also part of this program. *(Photo: Jeff Lehrer, USAID/Tajikistan Country Director (left) and Abdujabbor Rahmonov, Minister of Education (right))*



USAID Supports Polio Immunization in Tajikistan. To launch a week-long national polio immunization campaign, Ambassador Ken Gross, Deputy Minister of Health Azamjon Mirzoev, USAID Global Polio Eradication Coordinator Elyn Ogden, and representatives of WHO, UNICEF, and other Ministry of Health staff spoke at a televised press conference on May 25. The campaign will provide free vaccinations for about 1.2 million children five years of age and under. Since last spring's polio outbreak, USAID has contributed over \$1.3 million to combat polio in Tajikistan, investing in capacity building for the Ministry of Health, improving outbreak controls, and conducting multiple nationwide immunization drives. Following the press conference, Deputy Chief of Mission Necia Quast and USAID staff visited a local polyclinic to observe the immunization effort in progress. *(Photo: Child receiving the oral polio vaccination)*



PEPFAR Consultations Leverage Efforts to Combat HIV/AIDS in Tajikistan. More than 30 local and international organizations participated in a PEPFAR joint planning meeting on May 28. Participants discussed progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Tajikistan, prospective work plans and opportunities for closer collaboration. Deputy Minister of Health Dr. Azamjon Mirzoev and USAID Tajikistan Country Office Director Jeffrey Lehrer delivered opening remarks, followed by CDC Regional Director George Schmid, USAID Regional Health and Education Office Director Chris Barratt, and PEPFAR-funded implementing partners. In Tajikistan the PEPFAR program is implemented by USAID and CDC, with an estimated \$25 million in funding over the next five years across Central Asia. *(Photo: PEPFAR work plan discussions)*



USAID Develops English-Russian-Tajik Intellectual Property Rights Dictionary. On May 31 USAID's Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project marked the publication of a newly developed trilingual English-Russian-Tajik dictionary of intellectual property rights (IPR) terminology in a ceremony attended by representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Patent Center, business associations and mass media. The dictionary also contains a comprehensive introduction to intellectual property, copyright and industrial property rights, providing an authoritative reference for government employees, students and the private sector on legal issues related to IPR. The IPR dictionary was developed as part of the U.S. Government's

support for Tajikistan's efforts to bring its domestic legislation into compliance with internationally recognized standards in its bid to accede to the World Trade Organization. *(Photo: Tanya d'Allonnes, RTLC Chief of Party, (center) presents the IPR dictionary)*



First Group of Afghan Students Graduate from Cross-Border Educational Program. On May 14, the first group of Afghan students graduated from the University of Central Asia's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Khorugh, Tajikistan. Delegates from the U.S. and the Gorno-Badakhshon Autonomous Oblast addressed the 63 Afghan graduating learners, who were awarded scholarships as part of the USAID-sponsored Cross Border Vocational Education in Badakhshon project. *(Photo: Students of the fifth School of Professional and Continuing Education graduation)*



International AIDS Day Commemorated with Candlelight Memorial. On May 14, USAID supported an International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day event at the National HIV Center in Dushanbe to commemorate those lost to AIDS, show support for those living with HIV/AIDS, raise community awareness on related issues, and mobilize efforts for fighting this epidemic. The event was organized in close collaboration with the Government of Tajikistan and non-governmental organizations as part of USAID's Dialogue on HIV and Tuberculosis project, bringing together those affected by the disease and representatives of institutions and NGOs involved in the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS in Tajikistan. Event organizers distributed global and local statistics about the spread of HIV/AIDS, and hosted a film screening and discussion on this topic. All participants wore small red ribbons and took part in a candle-lighting ceremony in remembrance of the millions of lives lost to AIDS. Throughout the event,

special emphasis was placed on the necessity of HIV testing for timely, effective treatment. The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB project, which operates pilot programs throughout the region, provides technical assistance, training and direct outreach to Tajikistan's most at-risk populations, such as sex workers, intravenous drug users, people living with HIV, prisoners and migrants. *(Photo: Commemorating the International AIDS Day)*



USAID Provides Tajik Farmers with Needed Farm Equipment. On May 24, the Water User Association Support Program (WUASP) donated a wheeled excavator to the Federation of Water Users' Associations "Sarob" in Qubodiyon district of Khatlon Oblast. WUASPs assist Tajik farmers in improving irrigation water management, contributing to increased crop production. The success of this program has encouraged other water users' associations (WUAs) and water users to become more active and coordinate more closely. The project organized and supported 52 WUAs and four WUAs federations located in Rudaki, Vahdat, Qubodiyon, Jilikul, Qumsangir, Shahrituz, Zafarobod, Raushan, Rashtkala, and Spitamen districts. The handover ceremony marks the final phase of WUASP's successful implementation. *(Photo: USAID and WUASP team photo)*



USAID Supports In-country Situational Assessment. The USAID School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program has completed data collection trainings for Baljuvon, Temurmalik and Vose in Khatlon district, areas selected in close coordination with the Ministry of Education in accordance with the agreement that was signed between the Ministry of Education and USAID on May 10. This data will inform efforts to learn more about the factors that impact school dropout rates and the design of targeted interventions. Although Tajikistan is successful in maintaining enrollment rates in secondary education, dropout rates remain high especially among higher grades of the basic levels, particularly among girls. *(Photo: Researchers discuss the course of students' dropout)*



USAID Assists Tajik Government to Renew State Educational Standards. Seventy education specialists from across Tajikistan gathered for a two-day workshop to discuss secondary education standards and innovative lesson-planning methodologies at the Sughd in-service teacher training institute in Khujand. This initiative is one more example of continuous cooperation between USAID and the Government of Tajikistan in their pursuit for the improved quality of education in Tajikistan. USAID's Quality Learning Project facilitated a discussion on new national education standards to assist the Academy of Education as well as other central and regional educational institutes for professional development to develop a new national curriculum consistent with the government's new education strategy. Participants learned the concept of diversified lesson planning techniques with a special focus on lesson planning objectives. *(Photo: New national education standards discussions)*

Turkmenistan



USAID Trains Health Providers to Reduce Infant Mortality. In May and June, the USAID Quality Health Care Project held two 10-day training workshops on the World Health Organization's Effective Perinatal Care program, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for 71 Turkmenistani obstetricians/gynecologists, neonatologists, midwives and neonatal nurses in Akhal and Balkan Velayats. USAID is committed to improving maternal and child health in Central Asia. The workshops taught health care providers about evidence-based, patient-centered perinatal care through a series of lectures and hands-on activities focused on improving clinical practices, including infection prevention and patient care. The goal of the workshops was to reduce infant mortality by preventing and managing

birth asphyxia, newborn trauma and newborn infection. Through this interactive approach, the Quality Health Care Project, in close partnership with the Government of Turkmenistan and other international partners, is working to scale-up effective perinatal care implementation in maternity hospitals throughout the country. *(Photo: Participants listen to interactive lectures for health care providers)*

Uzbekistan



USAID Expands Efforts to Increase Food Safety and Security. In order to provide virus-free, disease-tested, high-yield grafting material and root stocks to rejuvenate orchard cultivars in Uzbekistan, one of USAID's local partners under its Agricultural Linkages ("AgLinks") project took delivery from the U.S. of over 1,500 grafting sticks, representing 45 different varieties of 6 stone fruits, and 10 pounds of seeds. The plant material was shipped from Foundation Plant Services, a self-supporting service department of the University of California, Davis. Per food safety and quality requirements, this material is being put to immediate use on nurseries using the latest varieties to propagate and rejuvenate fruit orchard planting material to increase food security in Uzbekistan. The imported materials will be used to increase the sustainable production of these fruits and will be propagated over one to three

agricultural seasons. In subsequent years, these materials can have nation-wide impact by increasing the availability and variety of fruits for domestic consumption and potentially export, meeting food security needs as well as generating income opportunities. *(Photo: Grafting plant materials)*



USAID AgLinks Project Increases Information Available to Farmers. Grapes are the highest priced horticultural product in Uzbekistan on a per kilogram basis and a favorite amongst farmers for income generation as both fresh produce and raisins. Farmers need regular access to information to remain current on best practices and to adjust to an ever-changing environment. USAID's Agricultural Linkages (AgLinks) project is addressing the shortage of accessible information available to orchard and vineyard farmers in Uzbekistan by producing best practices manuals on grapes in collaboration with the local Shreder Horticultural Institute. Three manuals addressing specific topics of farmer interest have been produced and will be distributed and integrated into training programs that will benefit over 10,000 farm households. *(Photo: A young farmer studies best practices manual in Samarkand)*



USAID Aglinks Project Provides Farmers Pest Control Information. The codling moth is the most common enemy of productive fruit orchards. USAID's AgLinks project began a test program in May to determine its prevalence in Uzbek orchards. The program's method reduces the amount of spraying and farmer costs while increasing effectiveness because of the targeted nature of pest control actions. Pheromone traps were established in apple, peach, cherry and plum orchards in Namangan Ferghana and Samarkand provinces at the beginning of the 2011 fruit growing season. Additional monitoring and control measures will be taken as the season progresses. *(Photo: A farmer holds a pheromone trap, which can capture large numbers of codling moths)*



Farmers Learn Best Storage Conditions by Crop. The USAID AgLinks Project trained 12 participants in the project's cold storage program in May, to better understand this market dynamic and benefit from properly stored foodstuffs. Information on optimal temperature and humidity requirements by crop, hands-on experience sorting, grading and packing, correct fruit storage techniques for local market requirements as well as methods on how to avoid potential crop interactions (e.g., apples and persimmons) and to assure cool air flow were provided by two local trainers and a fruit broker. Farmers employing the AgLinks introduced CoolBot technology, which allows use of room air conditioners at lower temperatures, have reported a significant profit in two weeks. *(Photo: Participants prepare apricots for cold storage in Namangan Province)*



Cascade Trainings for HIV, TB Health Providers. The USAID Dialogue on HIV and TB Project recently conducted two four-day trainings for health providers to discuss the needs of most-at-risk populations (MARPs) in terms of HIV and TB prevention and treatment. Participants gained correct HIV, TB and HIV/TB co-infection knowledge and committed to improving access of MARPs seeking services on HIV, TB and HIV/TB co-infection. Training topics included understanding MARPs' special needs, stigma and discrimination reduction, and communication skills for working with MARPs. Health service providers from Uchtepa, Yakkasaray, Yunusabad and Sabir Rakhimov districts of Tashkent city attended the cascade training. *(Photo: Trainers present on counseling methods)*

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